



ERASMUS+ INCOMING STUDENTS COURSE CATALOGUE

Department of English Language and Literature

COURSE TITLE: Semantics and Pragmatics		
Course instructor	Professor Marija Brala-Vukanović, PhD	
Study programme	Undergraduate Study Programme in English Language and Literature	
Status of the course	Compulsory	
Year of study	3	
ECTS credits and manner of instruction	ECTS credits	4
	Number of class hours (Lectures + Exercises + Seminars)	30+0+15

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

1.1. Course objectives

The aim of this course is to equip students with basic linguistic notions that should enable them to view linguistic meaning from different perspectives. The course offers an introduction to the basic concepts and methods in the analysis of natural language meaning through a survey of four major current approaches and their findings: philosophical semantics, descriptive (traditional) semantics, cognitive semantics, and pragmatics.

The course content and outcomes should prepare students for a number of future courses enable them to follow all other linguistic subjects and modules that they will encounter during their course of studies, e.g. dealing with meaning from a crosslinguistic perspective within the different translation courses.

1.2. Course enrolment requirements and entry competences required for the course

Basic knowledge in the main linguistic subfields (following the successful completion of a basic introductory linguistic course); good English spoken and written skills. Please contact the course instructor at mbrala@ffri prior to application.

1.3. Expected course learning outcomes

Upon the successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- understand the key semantic terms and notions, as well as the purpose of linguistic study of meaning;
- comprehend and identify sublexical components of meaning;
- comprehend and describe the main relations along the mind-body-meaning continuum and construct basic semantic networks;

- comprehend and describe different (and culture / language specific ways) how language conveys meaning.

In other words, upon the successful completion of the course students should be equipped with all the notions needed to deal with the problem of meaning in their own work, be it theoretical or practical research. The aim is to prepare students, particularly those who wish to continue their M.A. studies in one of the linguistic courses offered, to be able to cope with the problem of 'meaning' in scientific work relative to semantics or pragmatics. In fact, by the end of the course, students should be able to use accepted linguistic terminology when describing languages.

Crucially, this course introduces students to the scientific study of human language, using examples from a variety of languages of the world, including English, Croatian, Italian, German and / or other languages that students might be familiar with. In such a way, students gain an overview of the fundamentals of language and linguistics through practical and thought provoking examples. As a result, upon successful completion of the course students should be able to understand and practically address the need to study language from a crosslinguistic perspective, as well as why and how to do so using an interdisciplinary approach.

1.4. Course content

This course provides a general introduction to semantics and pragmatics. Four submodules are considered:

- a) philosophical semantics;
- b) descriptive (lexical) semantics;
- c) cognitive semantics; and
- d) pragmatics.

We begin with an overview of past attempts aimed at trying to pin down meaning in language (including Locke, Russel, Frege, Wittgenstein, Truth conditional semantics, all the way to Davidson's Radical interpretation). Having observed that all past attempts to define meaning fell short, we move into the realm of modern theoretical approaches. We begin with the study of meaning components (Katz's theory, Componential analysis, grammatical rules and semantic components, Jackendoff's conceptual structures), via models of Formal semantics (language as Logical metalanguage), and conclude with answers offered to the problem of meaning within the paradigm of Cognitive semantics (from conceptual components via image schemas and mental spaces to perspectives, profiling and scanning).

With regards to the issue of the relationship between sign and user, we take a look at following notions: deixis, conversational implicature, presupposition, speech act and conversational structure.

1.5. Manner of instruction

- ✓ Lectures
- ✓ Seminars and workshops
- ✓ Distance learning
- ✓ Individual assignments
- ✓ Other: research